



## WIC Program Data on Participation & Enrollment

### WHAT IS PENN?

PENN is Pennsylvania's Management Information System (MIS) for WIC local and state agency operations.

### HOW IS PENN USED TO DETERMINE THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS THAT PA WIC SERVES?

- **PENN captures participant data:** When a participant's food benefits are loaded onto their **EBT card**, the system records this information.
- **Offline benefit tracking:** The data is initially stored offline as food benefits are loaded.
- **Online system:** Once the food benefits are available for use, the system transitions to **online benefit tracking**, allowing real-time updates on the number of participants served.

In short, PENN helps track participant benefits and ensures they receive their food benefits, both offline and online. PA WIC is an offline state until December 2027.

### WHAT IS MEANT BY WIC PARTICIPATION?

Participation is the number of individuals who have had their EBT cards loaded with benefits. WIC participation refers to the active involvement of individuals or families in the WIC program, including receiving benefits, attending appointments, and utilizing the services provided, such as nutrition education and breastfeeding support.

### WHAT IS MEANT BY WIC ENROLLMENT?

WIC enrollment is the process of officially signing up for the WIC program. This involves meeting the eligibility requirements, submitting necessary documentation, and being certified as a WIC participant. WIC enrollment includes the number of individuals with active certifications.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PARTICIPATION AND ENROLLMENT?

Enrollment is the initial process to join WIC.

Participation is the ongoing engagement in the program's offerings.

The distinction between an enrollee and a participant is particularly important for breastfeeding women. All infants, including breastfed infants, who receive supplemental foods or food instruments during a report month are counted as participants in the federal reporting database. However, breastfed infants who receive no supplemental foods or food instruments are only counted as participants for the report months in which their mothers are counted as breastfeeding women participants. If an enrolled breastfeeding woman does not obtain their supplemental foods or food instruments during a report month, then neither they nor the breastfed infant(s) who receives no supplemental food or food instruments may be counted as a participant on the monthly report.



### IS THERE DATA ON HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE ELIGIBLE FOR WIC BUT NOT ENROLLED?

Currently, the Division of Health Resources and Services provides WIC with Table A (which is labeled WIC Eligible Populations in the attached documents on under this file). Currently, this table only determines persons under the 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

**Please note:** Outreach advocates from various outside organizations are advocating to include data for people whose income is under 215% of the FPL. Table A is not created by WIC State Agency.

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